

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-4 (Cancelled)

5. (Currently Amended) A printing system comprising:

at least one customer service system for receiving, via a network, order information sent by a customer and representing at least one print service to be performed on image data~~representing the content of an order of a customer for a print;~~

a plurality of laboratory servers for ~~outputting~~ performing the print services on image data~~based on the order information transferred via the network from the customer service system that has received the order information;~~ and

an order assigning system existing between the at-least-one customer service system and the laboratory servers, for receiving the order information from the customer service system, ~~for selecting one of the laboratory servers to output the print based on predetermined information,~~ and for transferring the order information to ~~the~~ a selected laboratory server;

wherein the order assigning system determines the selected laboratory server based on predetermined information, and

wherein the predetermined information is information in the order information specifying one of the laboratory servers ~~described in the order information by the customer.~~

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently Amended) A printing system comprising:

at least one customer service system for receiving, via a network, order information sent by a customer and representing at least one print service to be performed on image data ~~representing the content of an order of a customer for a print;~~

a plurality of laboratory servers for ~~outputting-performing the print services on image data based on the order information transferred via the network from the customer service system that has received the order information;~~ and

an order assigning system existing between the at-least-one customer service system and the laboratory servers, for receiving the order information from the customer service system, for selecting one of the laboratory servers to ~~output-perform the at least one print service on the image data, wherein the selection of the laboratory server is~~ based on predetermined information, and for transferring the order information to the selected laboratory server;

wherein the order assigning system ~~transferring-transfers~~ laboratory information related to ~~regarding at least the selected one of the plurality of laboratory servers~~ to the customer service system that received the order information,

the customer service system ~~generating-generates~~ selection information for determining a ~~desired the selected one of the~~ laboratory servers based on the laboratory information transferred from the order assigning system, and ~~transferring-transfers~~ the selection information to the order assigning system, and

the order assigning system ~~using-uses~~ the selection information as the predetermined information.

8-11 (Cancelled)

12. (Currently Amended) A printing system comprising:

a plurality of laboratory servers for outputting a print; and

at least one order receiving assigning system comprising:

a customer service system for receiving, via a network, order information sent by a customer and representing at least one print service to be performed on image data and including customer information from a customer ~~via the network~~, and

an assigning system for selecting, based on predetermined information, one of the laboratory servers to receive the order information, and for transferring the order information to the selected laboratory server;

wherein the predetermined information is information in the order information identifying one of the laboratory servers ~~specified by the customer in the order information~~.

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Currently Amended) A printing system comprising:

a plurality of laboratory servers for outputting a print; and

at least one order receiving assigning system comprising

a customer service system for receiving, via a network, order information sent by a customer and representing at least one print service to be performed on image data and

including customer information from a customer ~~via the network~~, and

an assigning system for selecting, based on predetermined information, one of the laboratory servers to receive the order information, and for transferring the order information to the selected laboratory server;

wherein the order receiving assigning system or systems generate selection information ~~by for determining a desired one of the laboratory servers~~ the selected laboratory server based on laboratory information related to ~~the selected~~ at least one of the plurality of laboratory servers, and use the selection information as the predetermined information.

15-21 (Cancelled)

22. (Currently Amended) The printing system of claim 7, wherein the order assigning system determines a desired one of the selected laboratory server ~~servers is determined~~ based on the laboratory information ~~related to the selected laboratory server~~ and customer-specific information.

23. (Currently Amended) The printing system of claim 22, wherein the laboratory information ~~related to the selected laboratory~~ is based on the location of the at least one selected ~~laboratory's location~~ and said customer-specific information is a customer's address or a customer's area code.

24. (Currently Amended) The printing system of claim 7, wherein the order assigning system determines a desired one of the selected laboratory servers~~is determined based on the laboratory information related to the selected laboratory server and the content of at least one print service represented by the order information.~~

25. (Currently Amended) The printing system of claim 24, wherein ~~the content of the order information specifies a particular print service to be carried out, and wherein a desired one of the laboratory servers is determined based on the laboratory information includes information regarding the capability of the selected~~ at least one laboratory for performing the particular print service.

26. (Currently Amended) The printing system of claim 7, wherein the laboratory information includes information regarding a desired one of the laboratory servers~~is determined based upon a determined load status of the selected~~ at least one laboratory server.

27. (Currently Amended) The printing system of claim 26, wherein the load status of the ~~selected~~ at least one laboratory server is determined by querying, at the time of selection, the at least one laboratory server for load status information.

28. (Currently Amended) The printing system of claim 26, wherein the load status of the ~~selected~~ at least one laboratory server is determined by querying, at the time of selection, a database containing load status information for the ~~selected~~ at least one laboratory server.

29. (Currently Amended) The printing system of claim 14, wherein ~~a desired one of~~ the selected laboratory ~~servers~~servers is determined based on the laboratory information ~~related to~~ ~~the selected laboratory server~~ and customer-specific information.

30. (Currently Amended) The printing system of claim 29, wherein the laboratory information ~~related to the selected laboratory is based on~~includes the ~~selected~~ location of the at least one laboratory's ~~location~~ and said customer-specific information is a customer's address or a customer's area code.

31. (Currently Amended) The printing system of claim 14, wherein ~~a desired one of~~ the selected laboratory ~~server~~servers is determined based on the laboratory information ~~related to the selected laboratory server and the content~~ at least one print service represented by of the order information.

32. (Currently Amended) The printing system of claim 31, wherein ~~the content of the order information specifies a particular print service to be carried out, and wherein a desired one of the laboratory servers is determined based on~~ information includes information regarding the capability of the selected at least one laboratory for performing the particular print service.

33. (Currently Amended) The printing system of claim 14, wherein ~~a desired one of the laboratory servers is determined based upon~~ the laboratory information includes a determined

load status of the ~~selected~~ at least one laboratory server.

34. (Currently Amended) The printing system of claim 33, wherein the load status of the ~~selected~~ at least one laboratory server is determined by querying, at the time of selection, the the at least one laboratory server for load status information.

35. (Currently Amended) The printing system of claim 33, wherein the load status of the ~~selected~~ at least one laboratory server is determined by querying, at the time of selection, a database containing load status information for the at least one ~~selected~~ laboratory server.

36. (New) The printing system of claim 7, wherein the selection information includes a candidate list of candidate laboratory servers determined based at least on the laboratory information transferred from the order assigning system.

37. (New) The printing system of claim 36, wherein the customer service system allows a user to designate the desired one of the laboratory servers from the selection information and wherein the order assigning system uses the user designation as the predetermined information.

38. (New) The printing system of claim 14, wherein the selection information includes a candidate list of candidate laboratory servers determined based at least on the laboratory information.

39. (New) The printing system of claim 38, wherein the customer service system allows a user to designate the desired one of the laboratory servers from the selection information and wherein the order assigning system uses the user designation as the predetermined information.